

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í CENSUS TASK FORCE – 2011

(an agency of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of India)

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To: Regional / State Bahá'í Councils & selected Local Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We are happy to learn that slowly and steadily the task of educating the rank and file of the Bahá'í community regarding the upcoming Government of India Census 2011 is being carried out by a number of capable believers in every state. We request the Regional / State Baha'i Councils that have as yet not appointed a Task Force in their areas to kindly take up the subject at the earliest opportunity to do so. At the National Level we have learnt that by 2011 India's population is expected to touch 120 crores (1.2 billion). Therefore, we must ensure that as many believers as possible are registered as "Bahá'is" in the Census Data Bank. Millions of volunteers are being mobilized from a vast pool of teachers and officials who would visit virtually every household in the country to collect information on issues like size of family, educational background, employment status, economic conditions and religious identity, etc.

According to the Registrar General and Census Commissioner database of village locations for each sub-district has been digitally prepared and for the towns, the census organizations have undertaken preparation of digital geographic database with the support of the Survey of India. In order to ensure that friends in the Bahá'í community are correctly registered, as a preliminary step we suggest that believers contact the offices of Right to Information to find out what religious identity was recorded in the last census (Census 2001) against their respective name. In case, a Bahá'í remembers having reported his / her religious status as "Bahá'í" but the census enumerators have recorded something else, then the believer may get this corrected and treat this exercise as preparation for ensuring that correct entry is made in the religious column in the upcoming Census. Right to Information Act came in force in 2004 and there are offices at *panchayat*, district, state and national levels.

Another important task is to establish contact with State Census Commissioners and develop cordial relations so that it may notify various district and *panchayat* offices and concerned government officials to register the "Bahá'is" as members of an independent religion, i.e. the Bahá'í Faith, and include this information in the training / orientation programmes at the district levels and the grassroots.

Should there be any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

With loving Baha'i greetings.

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Cc: Counsellors responsible for India

Auxiliary Board Members

Members, National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of India